No. 155.

The wisdom of this world...
1. Cor. III, 19. - "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

The man, who made this declaration, my Lord, was no ignorant enthusiast or vulgar declaimer, affecting to decry wisdom, because he did not possess it; he made a merit of giving up his understanding, as a sacrifice to the mysteries of religion. No, he was educated in the learning of the times, & his mind was stored with such lore as could be gained by sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law. He was purely no despiser of the wisdom of this world, & yet he freely, boldly, earnestly declares, that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

And there is much useful & noble truth, included within the spirit of this assertion. In its original connexion, it might have been intended as an allusion to the Gospel of St. Peter, as set in opposition to the false
wisdom of this world. Not that we are for a moment to suppose, that there is any thing in the religion of Jesus, which is at war with reason or true wisdom. If there be any system, it is in an eminent degree natural, and free from absurdity or inconsistency; it is rooted in facts, must be prepared to us under the name of a Gospel truth, does not harmonize with right reason, that circumstance itself is presumptive evidence against its being a part of our religion. God does not contrive it by the revelation of Scripture what he communicates by the revelation of Scripture or reason. It is true, there may be dissensions in the Bible, with unsanctified reason would never have been invited to or made known to all the divine doctrines, duties of the person approving themselves as once to the unenlightened faculties of man, join in concert with the dictates of our moral sense or feelings. It cannot be, then, to any opposition, between reason and faith, that Dr. Pulteney alludes in the text, off there be any reference of the kind. I have maintained, it must to the fibre systems of worldly wisdom in many religious subjects, and the impossibility that they should be found in the world. In this point of view, the wisdom of the world was truly foolish, before God. It was foolishness in the presence of that divine religion, that came from God. But for the time, that philosophers had thought so much as the existence of character of God, or the duties of man, or the ability nature of a future life. But their speculations were enshrouded in darkness, if beyond a little distance clouds of shadows rest on their prospects. They were not of certainty of clearing; of all that was there was a want of an infallible standard, to which an appeal might be made, or into fear of being misled. What the said was then a barren, nothing more. The sylph came to impart instruction in such a world, there could be no doubt, a sylph would not could not an impression. In truth, the wisdom of the world was foolishness in comparison with it. It was raised up by God in the humble guise of a Jewish proselyte, communicated these instructions, before with the wise men of antiquity dwindle into insignificance. It came in the name of power of God, is put to life, the reach of baseless theories of men. After the human mind had dwelt for ages, scarcely attained any thing, on such matters might not be without painful conse-
stake to Him she has confided them. But compared with the range of beings above us, especially with the great scope of Being, we shrivel into little ones. I might say into nothingness. Considering ourselves in this light, shall we not say, we are incorporated with weakness, surrounded with darkness? We are set into the midst of dependent, helpless, yeagerous are consumed before the facts, these are expanded into a condition which renders them all to bear any thing of the works of God. We then begin to look about us, take note of some of the wonders, and we think sets every where, But we have scarcely had time to select a gratification of curiosity about these sets of nature. I the various enchanting topics of specula
ing presented to us, when death comes it carries us away from our investigations, it takes us to a different scene of action. To know, that we know nothing, was said by one of the ancients, to be the height of knowledge. ev
ey thing about us helps to teach us our ignorance; not a blade of grass is a particle of matter, but parts to shame our nostrums to wisdom. We turn our eyes to the be
cies, with them by names, arrange them in classes. We look on the earth, a tiny world beyond its surface, even
amine the plants, to which it gives sufficient nourishment. We speculate upon, in our frame of constitution, have even, indeed, to know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. But, after all, the framers of our investigations through those of our inquiries as these on other topics, do not lead us, as far, before difficulties are presented, nor we cannot understand mysteries into which we cannot penetrate. What do we know of the manner, in which causes produce their effects? What knows me of the union of soul’s body, with the action of spirit, upon matter? What do we understand of the works of nature, except merely that they are the way, in which God chooses to operate? It is only the out-side of things, with which we are acquainted. The internal structure and hidden openings are beyond our research, in which it is not for us to pry. But when we turn from the limits of defective human knowledge, and contemplate Him whose knowledge has no bounds, we shall find the words of the Apostle scarcely strong enough to express our feelings. It shall see, that indeed, the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. Conscience is a part of the nature of Deity, without it, we can form no idea of an all perfect Being. The infinite mind pervades the universe! No one with me, knows the past, the present, or the future. So Him there is no secret, no mystery, no difficulty. The grasp in me were of the immense chain of causes of effects, all the gradations of beings, with their mutual connexions, and dependencies, are ever present to his contemplation. No matter whether it be worlds, or the particles of dust and gold be composed, systems, or the beings that dwell upon them, from the grandest to the most minute, made for engagement of blessedness with an apparatus of happiness, all alike, from the anchor to the insect, all under the entire eye, gave embrace in the vast frame of his providence. When therefore one thinks of the knowledge of man, in an region with the bounds of Deity, you are forced to compare weakness with omnipotence, blindness with the fountain of heavenly knowledge, darkness with the full breaking dawn. Not language, but the labor of thought, as much as its soil, is far too weak to express the distance between man’s and his Maker; it has not terrors to tell of the hollowness and ignorance of the one, of the majesty and omniscience of the other. Most surely, all that man has known can know, in his present state, is but the rudiments, the dregs of wisdom; it is not foolishness with God, with Him who surveys intuitively myriads of worlds, knows too well.
of a single hair of our heads, as if it vibrated to the remotest corners of the universe?

2. We are constrained to acknowledge that the providence of God is goodness in its highest form, when we endeavor to raise our thoughts to God himself, to employ them in the contemplation of his perfections. Nothing can be more true, than the declaration of Scripture, that "God hath not left himself without witness," yet it is equally true, that man by searching cannot find them out to perfection. God hath revealed himself in nature, in revelation, and in all understandings of his purposes, so as to reform upon him the best of his purest effects, in such a manner that every admission of gratitude, every expression of weakness, every prayer of faith, should be adored to him, whose foreknowledge is to rule, to rule us, subject to us, as is the Fountain source of light; his happiness flow out upon the various orders of beings, and people his immeasurable domains. For all the fruits of religious faith, of practice, of knowledge of God is abundantly ample. We know that he is present of infinite perfection, we know that his government is wisest, is the law of ordering wisdom, of boundless love, that rest, repose, no toil, toil, no enslave, no toil, by the law of nature in its central purposes. He is led to the be

half of his existence by a body of evidence, as one from me to another, like a path floor'd with man's light. And with regard to the character of the Deity, one rational mind can doubt, that it is the centre of all excellence of slaves. All the qualities in men we regard as amiable of grace, of piety, which are collected, embodied in our idea of God, most of the difference, that they are all stretched to imparity of communication with eternity, but not for a moment do we find, that when man looks up to the throne of God, he sees it shrouded in clouds of darkness. Throughout the whole, it brightens with the beams of spotless perfection, as it the chemist of peace spread their wings. When we speak of our inprocess of knowledge with regard to God, we mean as much in perfection, as can be after the least of distrust over our views of the Almighty. We mean that the perfection, that must necessarily be the thoughts of the finite, when employed about the infinite, to the conceptions with the mind of the dust forms of the sovereign of the universe. How can it be that a man like man, encompassed with a greatness of glory, should be able to understand him, whose thoughts reach to
immortality of the soul. God himself hath declared, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as your ways." We know not the nature of the divine administration; but we do not think it may be necessary that these principles should be applied in the government of a universe, if men are not acquainted with the circumstances of our own world. Our own race of beings, as they are present to the divine mind, much less with the actions of other worlds and other classes of beings. We should regard this earth, as but a small part of the dominions of the Almighty; if we were to consider his operations as designed merely for us, we should mistake as foolishly, as would the inhabitants of a small town, who should suppose that the laws of the government of the country were intended solely for them. From the course of God's creation, in which we are placed, with all its weakness and imperfection, we cannot look upon the operations of the laws of nature, without which we are surrounded, as designed upon the measures of an infinite mind should take to effect the purposes of infinite wisdom. And we must remember that the plans of nature are not only subject to the whole universe, but are taken with respect to the eternal ages; they concern not only our peace, but all time; till we can open the long track of ages, in which events are commenrinate with the course of his wisdom, we cannot hope to fathom the proceedings, or penetrate into the purposes of his infinite wisdom. No is an ignorance only; that hears us to suppose there is any such thing as real evil in the universe; faith tells us to believe, "All things work together for good," "All things work for good to them that love God and call upon his name."}

"Eternity, when we reflect on the mysteries of the Almighty, it was well said, that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.""

"The truth declared in our text is exemplified in the conduct of these. He employs their talents to acquirements in decaying religion, or striving to weaken his authority. Such wisdom is indeed foolishness with God. The world has seen more terrible, more sweeping, more quiet, the cause of virtue and religion. It has been as

"built by every weapon, with ingenuity and dexterity, could invent; sometimes under the mask of friendship, sometimes in the vicinity of open warfare, new arts personed armies of men with the batteries of ridicule."

"Now think upon, God looks upon the powers ofPlutarch, as he has enforced, employed in this charnel and..."
cause? How must he regard those of his children, he
our endeavors, to take from weakness its pro-
put, from more experience, their only gage com-
to best away from evil, the trembling anxious the
ground. I find, he can stand, for among the
notions to string to death, is that the ground on which its
its
a formal seal over another's name, and a court
virtue from the master, who shall bless, or around of the
he? Can you think that God can look upon these
nine hand are busy at work, otherwise, than
the indignation of solemn disapprobation? Shall
be not accosted by reason, as foolishness, may
than foolishness? Shall he not confirm to us, the
like those, of whom it is recorded, that they in the
stone to build a temple unto heaven, in defiance of the
laws? For God has not given us light from heaven
that one should seek to gran'd its beams, he has not
reached forth to us a staff to guide us? Suppose we, th"
the valley of the shadow of death, that one should care
lady. I sincerely think it away. All the solemn
worship, by which the mediation of God have been
forced to us, all the sufferings of the Messiah
this has, all the trials of apostles and heralds of the
Gospel, were set forth? If it were better to pursue the
cause, to the everlasting the stability of the law
for eternity, for these good alone all things
are done; they are the delight of this world, I emplo
ment or can, I shall find, that these words
for God is foolishness in the sight of God.

The principles contained in our best sects in their true
light, these arts of intrigue, cunning, are termed by the
world wisdom, arises from their true name - foolishness.
Aphorism has no honor in the sight of God; it has many
signify of treachery, from the most honorable titles, they
are more than worthless, they are criminal, in the eyes of
man, at the death not as many as they.

Nothing is more contemptible, the arts of worldly wisdom, do
it not, by the power of what is the act, by the strength of
and the strength of God. But this is something very different.
from that managing, tricking, overreaching, great, as is called a faculty of getting along in the world; a
that is very much in favor with the great ones of
men, inasmuch, I mean, that he would be esteemed better
than a fool, who should pursue the simple forms
cause of integrity, who always acts in right correctness.
it is right, even if he himself suffers by it. This being so very honest, we are told, is a meekness out of princi-
piece; others practice deception, why should not we? The
game of slavery, for it deserves no better name, is the
various ways under many specious pretences. The
young man, before he comes forward in life, is instruc-
ted to look out well for himself. Yet number one or two
which manifestly have all things every chance for promo-
ting his interest. Thus is case hard that I'm self-judged
before he comes to act his part in the theatre, and part
of this has prepared to make the most of all the tools
of good worldly wisdom as it is called. He throws him-
selves into the midst of the world, as there lies in ambush
to seize every advantage, and make a prey of the uninso-
culated and unpractised. If he retains any honesty, it is of
that base sort, nay allows him to partake in corruption
as pleased, with gives free course enough for all the
decadent modifications of fraud. He will use words, in a
short a double meaning, or, take the meaning, as it is
best unto his interest. By looks, actions, and hints, he
will imply a greater deal, in order to draw out the
avertence, as then start back any he never intended any
such thing. Under cover of informing the ignorant, he
will lead them on from one step to another, till they
are prepared for his purposes. He will take advantage
of expressions thoughtlessly used, to prevent greater than
to a sense, in the speeches never designed. I'm shut up
their, all the masses of intrigue, deception, prevarica-
tion merely as a scene, in which each one is to get what
he can. nay, he is very considerate about the means.
And if he can do all and every appearance, so
much the better; if while he is practising fraud or prep-
and, he can seem benevolent at hand. He will gain the
double advantage of keeping a good name, and winning
at the same time his own interest. There may be about
as much iniquity and unfairness within the bounds of
the law, as without. But this man of the world
will be sure to think that virtue consists in avoiding
legal penalties, so it would be a practical cagy
at any further. Such is what are born the misfits of
the world; the pupils in this school are considered
full valuable men, men whose society is to be had; to
whose experience young adventurers look for instruction
in the ways of cunning and intrigue. But, on
the, it is impossible that they should speak on this subject
without indignation. This misfit of them all is not
contemptible enough with you. This man, whom
other considers so nice, or she silently smiles in triumph at the success of his intents, & solicits herself an every instance of graceful cordiality. has that you this man stand in the rights of God? He is regarded as a fool, while he is busy engrossed with his plans of devastation, God taught to swear the then well of deceit, & he has sworn to entangle his fellow men. How shall the one, look otherwise than with stern displeasure on one, who frets among the time of his probation here, in wishing to undo in laying snares & danger against it, while his heart yearns to the calls of humanity, under the old in the influence of corruption, & who gives the immaterial form to all the base vanities of low cunning, often death from them perhaps in the very act of endeavoring to ensnare this fellow being? and not in the world until regard this adopt in his wisdom; that is of little consequence but passion has God will regard him; & I further ask how this wise man will appear to the sublimest part of a righteous man, where nothing is to be gained by the profoundest skill of the most consummate art, where there will be no model to stand by & applaud once more, deception - where all the works that had ensued the

purposes, thoughts of men shall be torn away, the heart shall find all the temporary resources, on which once valued itself so highly, to be nothing better than fables of lies. Then thank you, be well then amused for we dwell in the body, he the good of he they only. This thy thing, or the word I calls wisdom, is through stupid folly; there is but one form of the wisdom that is found an antity, & against all other pretenses are highness gossamer or frail as the spider's web.

From the instructions from which I lay no heart, merely lean, in the first place, a lesson of humility. If the highest reach of knowledge is wisdom, to which man can aspire, be nothing but falsehoods & weaknesses before God, does it become us to entertain the most lofty views of our attainments, to crush the rising spirit of pride. The most splendid intellect, that ever threw its light upon mankind, is but a candle before the Infinite mind. What then are we, that we should boasts of our wisdom? Let us applaud Babel, or flattering reliance on the follies of an uplifted hearts. - And another lesson, tells we should learn, my friends, from this subject is that through, unbending integrity, of a deep, heartfelt
verseance for religion, are our tone, glory, interest, of

dominion... These are the things, that shall last, when all
the alti s of centurie s, under the heart may have
shone itself, while have passed away... These are true
mossen; all other things, in comparison with the are
falseness of God... The true's character is built up
of unyielding integrity, of a pure love of religion, of God;
other qualificat ions are like the scaffolding of
the building, where shall be taking down, when it shall
stand faith in perfect beauty in the world above. come
to that "building of God, that house not made with
hands, stand in the heavens."

Aug. 1822.

At Rome, Aug. 25, 1822 - forenoon.
At Mr. Gammel's, March, 1823, forenoon.
At Lyon, April 6, 1823 - forenoon.
At Genoa, Aug. 17, 1823 - forenoon.
At Mr. Weiler (Volto Santo), Feb. 22, 1824 - forenoon.
At Lincoln, Dec. 24, 1826 - forenoon.
At Rome, July 10, 1827, after noon.